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P O E M S.

For dearest Julia
with much love from E.A.P.

Jan. 1875.



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Christ walks with men upon the shore,
He walks to men upon the wave;
They tremble when those billows roar,
A pathway for His feet which pave.—Page 8.

VOICES OF THE SEA,

AND OTHER POEMS,

BY

EDWARD A. PHILLIPS, B.A.

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LOAN STACK

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VOICES OF THE SEA.

THE WHISPER OF THE SHELL.

THIS shell, of thousands on the strand
Forsaken by the spoiling waves,
I take, and seem to hear a sound
Far in its pink-enamell'd caves :

Not as of ocean, where strong winds
Have with its countless billows warr'd ;
But ocean's grand accusom'd part
In Nature's homage to its God.

Faintly its cadence and its swell
Breathe, in that innermost recess,
The thought that fills the great deep's heart
With its sublime mysteriousness.

Such thought as memory's winding cells
To listening solitude restore,
And which the long-lapsed tide of years
Made vocal once upon life's shore :

Sad without portent, since none dreads
The tale glean'd from departed years ;
And memory's face, if often pale,
Yet never can wax pale with fears.

This spreads a deeper calm around
While seems this breathing shell to me
To catch, in faintest tones from far,
The solemn voices of the sea.



THE SEA.

ONE said, whose gentle life—so brief!
Now dwells where there is no more sea,
“An instrument of loss and grief
The ocean always seems to me.”

Who would her fancy have gainsaid,
When, from the spot on which she stood,
Half the world's breadth of waters spread
To that of her young widowhood?

Another said, “On yonder beach,
The wild breaker's passionate moan
Is, for my heart's great sorrow, speech,
When it can find none of its own.”

I know not what its phase may be
To any one's uncertain mood,
But God, who fashion'd the great sea,
Beheld that it was very good.

Good was it of a truth to me
When, with unclouded skies above,
Around, the glittering Indian sea,
A voice spake to me, "God is love."

I ask not where the Paradise
In which He walk'd with man of old ;
Mine lay beneath those tropic skies,
The ocean was my Shepherd's fold.

Nautilus-like, my spirit moves
Along smooth deeps : when winds affright,
Out of their sound it drops and proves
His care and calmness infinite.

Christ walks with men upon the shore,
He walks to men upon the wave ;
They tremble when those billows roar,
A pathway for His feet which pave.

I love the sea that has obey'd
Consistently, since time began,
The will of Him its depths who made
Before He made rebellious man.

Earth's beauties bloom upon its breast,
And soon are wither'd in the sun,
But ocean's, in its heart possess'd,
Live till the sands of time are run.

When all its secrets are reveal'd,
The sea itself shall be no more ;
As lips that speak, and then are seal'd,
Loved for the message that they bore.

I play'd upon its sands, when time
To me was in its infancy ;
And the first thought of the sublime
Was whisper'd to me by the sea.

And when, in after years, that place—
Alone with touching memories—
I saw, no change was on its face,
It was a past that never dies.

The footprints that with mine impress'd
Those sands, ten thousand tides ago,
Have, some of them, the pilgrim's rest
Attain'd, and none are with me now :

Only the long white line of foam
Upon the smooth unconscious shore,
Breathes with a sigh a sound like "Home;"
One Home to be and one no more.



A SISTER'S VOICE.

How often on my heedless ear,
In days departed, that sweet tone
Had fallen soft ; but, though so near
The words were breathed, I did but hear
Not half they meant was known.

Now, stealing o'er the moonlit wave,
With the wild music of the sea,
Lost words from many an early grave—
Words which a gentle sister gave
Come sadly back to me.

I close mine eyelids, and I stand
Where no deep billows roll around ;
For, in my childhood's far-off land,
I seem to clasp her outstretch'd hand,
And listen to the sound.

Thus, one by one, youth's joys are gone
Ere we their costliness discern ;
Then, far on life's waste billows borne,
We close our weary eyes forlorn,
And woo them to return.

THE STORMY PETREL.

UP the wild ocean's storm-built heights,
Cloud-capp'd with driving spray,
Mark yon sea-fondling's gleesome flights,
With the loud winds at play.
So to true hearts shall subject be
Life's troubled outward form,
As these vex'd elements to thee,
Blithe spirit of the storm.

THE ALBATROSS.

I NEVER can forget how I have seen,
In ocean's boundless solitudes, thy form
Weird and majestic, gliding now between
The deep sea-hollows, now, upon the storm,
Climbing the cloudy ramparts of the sky,
As one inured to tragic destiny ;
Or, while the desolate music of the blast
Thrill'd in the harp-strings of the corded mast,
Sweeping with lordly state our vessel by.
Where is thy rest ? since fix'd abode is not
In all these regions. Thou art like some thought,
Moody and dark, which dominates man's soul,—
Where worse winds blow and deeper waters roll,—
Finding, where peace eludes the wand'rer's quest,
A sullen calm, the counterfeit of rest ;
Wherewith, on pliant wing, the open wild
It ranges beneath skies unreconciled,
Part of a scene with ceaseless woes oppress'd.

NEAR HOME.

HE only calm, of all that storm-toss'd crew,
Whose fainting spirits hourly fainter grew,
While louder still the adverse tempest blew,—

He only calm, knew well nor height nor deep
Was there where the strong arm would fail to keep,
Of Him who “giveth His beloved sleep.”

So he lay down to rest : but while he dream'd,
Another scene, in which no starlight beam'd,
To compass him with storm and darkness seem'd.

Impell'd by mad, unthinking zeal, he sped
From where God's martyr Stephen now lay dead,
The guiltless blood of other saints to shed.

Nor sun nor star illuminates his way,
When suddenly a beam more bright than day
Pours on his waken'd soul its burning ray ;

And One calls to him from the glorious height,
Speaks to his heart, sore stricken with the light,
Speaks to the man deprived of his proud sight.

“ Say why, O Saul, thou persecutest me ?
But stand upon thy feet, for men shall see
The Name of Jesus magnified in thee.”

Anon the tumult is an angry throng
Of his own kindred : at his hand no wrong
Have they received, yet for his life-blood long.

Now safe from them, and years of suff’ring pass’d,
God’s chosen ones around his neck have cast
Their loving arms, and weep and hold him fast.

He wakes, it is a dream ; the storm-wind blows ;
His spirit yearns for that last scene and those,
For round him gather neither friends nor foes.

Yet comes a friend, as the clear light serene
That men behold the riven clouds between ;
One who the face of Christ has lately seen.

“ Fear not, O Paul ; thou must be brought to Rome ;
It lieth in thy way and near thy home :
Fear not, though loud the tempest, white the foam.”

Nor does he fear, but, strong in hope that clings
To joy within the veil of earthly things,
Quits fear's low realm as upon eagle wings.

Yet one stage more, beyond this last rough sea,
And he, unwreck'd by many storms, shall be
With Stephen's Lord, from death's frail body free.



SONNETS.

RESURRECTION.

BY this cold rock and in this cheerless gloom,
Wherefore, lone weeper, hast thou vainly cried
Such bitter tears upon an empty tomb,
Deeming the absence of thy joy its doom ?
Look up, behold, One standeth at thy side,
Worthier these longings than th' embalméd dead,
One God hath given to mourners in His stead—
To all with tears who seek the Crucified.
He spake : in bitterness her heart replied ;
But as she gazed on Him with looks forlorn,
Lifting her pale face to the light of God,
Through her chill frame there flush'd the hope of
dawn ;
Earth with its tombs—its thousand tombs—was
gone,
And radiant in eternal life she stood.

FAITH.

“FATHER, where is the lamb?” The old man leant,
And look’d upon his child. Had those clear eyes
Sought out the mystery of his soul’s intent?
Nay, there no gath’ring cloud of dark surmise
With the pure ray of meek inquiry blent.
“My son, for man’s most costly sacrifice,
God will Himself the chosen lamb provide.”
No voice was heard upon the lonely height;
Each call’d upon his Father—none replied.
On that dear face, now blanch’d a deathly white,
Look’d love’s last agony; above, the knife
Hung like a falcon o’er the shrinking life;
When, lo! God saw His bloodless triumph won,
And broke the awful silence: “Spare thy son!”

HOPE.

“WILT thou go with this man?” “If I should go,”
The maiden mused within herself, “I yield
The Past, the Present, all of joy I know,
Save Hope’s one star, that soon may cease to glow.
And, lo! my father’s trembling lips are seal’d,
And he whose arm hath ofttimes been my shield
Forbids not.” Then, in tearful accents low,
“Yea, God hath surely sent him; I will go.”
So, from the dwelling she should see no more,
Southward the patriarch’s meek camels strode,
And to strange lands the Syrian damsel bore:
Most blesséd among women, she who chose
The tent of Sarah for her fix’d abode,
Over whose top the star of Jacob rose.

SUPPLICATION.

“LORD, of a truth Thy straiten’d children own
How these, whose tumult and hot rage divine
Such ills against this holy place of Thine,
The nations and their gods have quite consumed;
But Thou Thyself, Jehovah, God alone,
Whose high decree their former victims doom’d,
On their proud heads Thy wrath hast never shown.
Now, Lord, arise, for David’s royal throne,
Thine ancient covenant, and smite his foes.”

There went an angel forth that night and slew,
Till when at dawn the pealing trumpets blew
To battle, of the mighty none arose:
Who did arise, with secret horror fled,
By none pursued—the living from the dead.

UNBELIEF.

Is unbelief a Philistine—a man
Of giant frame, six cubits and a span,
With target, helm, and greaves of solid brass,
And coat of mail, through which no spear can pass?
And cries he with a bitter, taunting cry,
“Jehovah and his armies, I defy;
Let one approach who holds not life too dear”?
Yet flows a stream, the camp of Israel near,
Whose crystal waters to the eye display
God’s instrument to him who in God’s way
Meets this Philistine, not with sword or spear:
That men may learn to make *His* name their tower,
Who, by the faith which magnifies His fear,
Can smite the sin which scorns his righteous power.

DISCIPLESHIP.

“ALL these have left me; earth hides not its good,
Its gifts demand not faith, as those above,
Its words are easy to be understood,
Men cannot wait the end of suff’ring love.
Can *ye* do more than they? Has certain loss,
In your esteem, some germ of richer gain?
Or will you choose earth’s crown, and leave my
cross—

Turn to its solace from your Master’s pain?”

“Lord,” one replies, “if we should go from Thee,
Whose words shall make the path, which all must
tread,

Of sorrow happy, and the spirit free?
Whose pledge of life shall banish mortal dread?
When Thou art far, *who* shall in love draw near,
And to the heart speak all it longs to hear?”

SONSHIP.

THEY say yon stars, whose scarce distinguish'd light
Is fancy-faint to our bewilder'd sight,
Are central suns, filling with potent beams
Regions unmeasured. So, through time's dark night,
A little thing the rumour'd glory seems
Of those who dwell in resurrection day ;
Dim is their light, alas ! and far away,
And of them no man righteous judgment deems.
Yet, where th' unwearied watch earth's fever'd dreams,
Nearer than any to the throne are they
Of equity divine : their portion His—
Beyond the subtle workings of decay—
Who brightness of the Father's glory is ;
Whom all things were created to obey.

PEACE.

The following lines were suggested by the plan, recently adopted in France and Germany, of furnishing all the principal fortresses of those countries with a supply of carrier-pigeons, for purposes of war. 1874.

SWEET dove, to whose quick eye the earth redeem'd
Of old, its fresh, glad life did first display ;
On whose white wing the solitary ray,
That lit thee home, with ling'ring lustre gleam'd ;
In these last ages—best of all esteem'd—
How wicked men have made thee miss thy way ;
Thy fond home-instinct for nought better deem'd
Than to facilitate their bloody fray !
Sore is creation's travail for that day
When He, who once thy meek resemblance bore,
Shall to His children peace and love restore ;
Nor love this chief behest alone obey,
But, from those scenes mock'd by thy blood-stain'd
wing,
Glad signs of universal concord bring.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION (Matt. iv.)

AGAIN, upon a mountain summit high,
Together stood, irreconcilable,
Pride's restless and imperious majesty,
And, open-brow'd, the Son of God and man ;
All earth's dominions spread beneath their feet.
And now, to consummate in one dread hour
Ruin complete and beyond remedy,
"Wilt thou," he said, who wore the crown of guile,
"For these, with all their glory, worship me?"
What said the Son to him who thus would scale
Th' imagined height of sin and hate supreme
Above the majesty of right and love,
Incarnate to do all the will of God?
He only fix'd on him the eyes which wept

For dear Jerusalem, his deadly foe,
And, "O mine enemy, depart," He said;
"For it is written, Thou shalt worship God,
And serve Him only."

Having this endured,
In meekness He pursued th' untrodden way
Of pure obedience to death; the joy
Contemplating afar of heaven and earth
Made new, His rich unmarr'd inheritance,
Who that dire insult bore: as when the sun
Chases away all noxious damps and dread
Of treacherous night, and everything beneath,
From the clear dew-drop on the emerald plain
To the wide splendour of the sparkling sea,
Hails his return, and owns his kingly sway.

CONFLICT.

SAVIOUR of sinners, Lord of saints,
Beneath two loads my spirit faints ;
I do the evil I would shun,
The service due is left undone.

O Jesus, save ! O Christ, subdue !
The old is weaker than the new,
When Thou dost grasp my hand of faith ;
Thy death my life, Thy life my death.

Thy Spirit is the missing key ;
One door He shuts, one opes to me,
And He makes good the twofold claim,
Part mine, part Thine, of Thy great Name.

A CHRISTIAN.

God had been with him, though he knew it not,
In the hush of eventide,
When his body had rest from its daily toil,
And the din of the world had died.

He only knew that exceeding still
Grew that world about his soul ;
That a sense of being, unfelt till then,
On its solemn silence stole.

Then life look'd new when the morning broke—
Past, Present and Future new ;
For the things were false that seem'd true before,
And those that seem'd false were true.

In his lofty soul there dwelt a peace
Apart from life's common ills,
As waters that stand in some hollow dark
Of the everlasting hills.

And he pass'd among men as rivers pass
Through a parch'd and thirsty soil,
Till life and gladness sprung up like flowers
In the place of sorrow and toil.

They said he was one of a patient few
Who follow the Christ of God
In that lowly path through this world of woe
Which His blesséd footsteps trod.



PILGRIMAGE.

LIGHTEN'D with an inward light,
Still we go, by day and night,
Onward through the things of sight.

In this way, which men deride,
Was the One ne'er turn'd aside
Crucified and glorified.

Life's vicissitudes and pains
All shall have their suited gains
In the kingdom where He reigns.

In the midst of Paradise
Grows a tree whose fruit supplies
Conscious bliss that never dies ;

And the loving ones who *do*,
Not the favour'd ones who *know*,
Heav'n's pearl gates shall enter through ;

Where no evil can intrude,
By the Lord of life endued
With complete beatitude.

This the rest our spirits crave,
This the spoiling of the grave,
This the Love so strong to save.



PROVIDENCE.

Two marvels hold imperial place
In yonder infinite expanse ;
Like which, the mystery of grace,
And that less marvel some call chance.

Only an eagle eye can scan
The glory of the greater light ;
The other, every eye of man
Can watch, that will, through earth's dark night.

Yet small his wealth who only knows
The gifts half seen through nature's dreams :
Dew-diamonds on a wither'd rose,
All stolen by the morning's beams.

SUBMISSION.

WHAT Thou hast will'd is best,
My Lord, my God, before the worlds were made :
Only in part to me are now display'd
The counsels of Thy breast.

Often the bitter part,
The labour that shall end in sweet repose,
Joseph's rough speech while yearning to disclose
The fulness of his heart.

I bear because 'tis Thou ;
As a sick child resists all others' craft,
But, seeing in its mother's hand the draught,
Says, " I will take it now ! "

Thou armest, Lord, with strength,
Thy children, even joyfully to bear
Those chast'nings whereby they are made to share
Thy holiness at length.*

* Heb. xii. 10.

“RETURN UNTO THY REST.”

How weary was my soul,
By grief and care oppress'd,
Subject to sin's control,
When came that voice so bless'd,
“Return unto thy rest.”

“Then there is rest for me?”
My troubled heart replied:
The voice said, “Come and see”:
I came unto the side
Of Jesus crucified.

Perfect was the repose
Beneath His smile on me,
Who all my sins and woes
Had borne upon the tree,
That I might thus be free.

Brother, in search of rest—
Search sorrowful and vain,
Come, too, a welcome guest,
Count all things loss to gain
Him who for thee was slain.

For nothing else can give,
Even while earth's hopes are high,
True pleasure while you live,
Still less when, all pass'd by,
You're left alone to die.

Come, pillow your sad brow
Upon His loving breast;
Unhesitating, *now*,
Attend that voice so bless'd,
“Return unto thy rest.”



THE MIRAGE.

THE busy hum of Oriental mart,
That still, a dream-like sound, when far away,
Fails and is heard again,
Like echoes born of echoes in the mountains,

Faint and more faint, at length was heard no more
On the bare confines of the trackless waste
Which, like a sea of sand
In waveless calm, earth's multitudes divided.

The swarthy Islamite with sullen brow,
Lord of this land through which he journey'd lone,
From morn to night survey'd
Th' unchanging aspect of his void dominion ;

From morn to night through many a year-long day
Of utter solitude, till thought refused
To wait on sense severe,
And all the space with forms fantastic peopled. .

Again, in courtyard of the gilded mosque,
Abstracted worshippers spread forth their palms,
Or touch'd with one accord
The marble pavement with their dusky foreheads.

Again, through narrow streets flow'd on the stream
Of drowsy life, and merchants strew'd their wares,
Heedless of passers by,
In rich profusion under fresco'd arches.

Till, stricken suddenly by death's keen shaft,
His dumb companion sank beneath its load,
From pleasures of the past
Wakening the dreamer to a dreaded future.

Onward he sped, nor other living thing,
In the broad plain and boundless fields of air,
Saw, save the vulture's flight,
High overhead his joyless way that traversed.

Onward unflagging through night's sultry gloom
Till day's return, more fear'd than fell decree
Of tyrant by his slave,
Then wish'd, in his despair, he too had perish'd.

But wherefore die? for lo! upon the verge
Of prospect, suddenly a sight appears—
His eye hath never seen,
His fancy never hath conceived a fairer:

Deep as the azure heaven, a cool expanse
Of rippled lake that, to the nearer shore
Rolling its thin blue wave,
Woos the faint traveller to its blissful borders.

Of this all happy sights and sounds were born,
Dear to reviving hope, to memory dear,
Light as the snow-sail'd barque
That dipp'd and rose upon its tranquil bosom.

The plume-crown'd pillars of slender palm he saw
That mark'd the dwellings of his tribe, and heard
Once more, beneath their shade,
The musical clamour of his children's voices.

“Would thou wert nearer,” spake he, as he strove
Sternly with death to reach life's bounteous goal;
In every pulse an age
Of oy unspoken, or unspoken anguish.

“ Would thou wert nearer, or a sight less fair,
O urgent promise of too rich a prize ;
Or fate, unmoved and dumb,
Were like a man, with heart to bleed and pity ! ”

More had he utter'd of the soul's distress
For lack of joy whose fulness waits so near,
When, moving westward, blew
A wav'ring breeze across those magic waters :

Nor rose their surface, as the yielding tide
Of other waters, but afar withdrew ;
Then hung in middle space
Awhile, and vanish'd like an airy vision.

While underneath lay stretch'd the arid plain,
By no cool stream refresh'd, no verdure crown'd ;
Farther than eye could reach
Nought but the barren and the burning desert.

With one great cry, his arms to heaven he raised,
Then stagger'd through the sickly heat and glare
Now closing on his sense
In sudden and impenetrable darkness.

Ere yet th' increasing bulks of Arab train
Blotted the margin of the pale horizon,
The wand'ers whiten'd bones
Whirl'd in the dust-cloud of the mad sirocco.

And vain as this, the wise in heart have said,
All mortal hope in earth's illusions fair,
Imaging like a dream
The bliss of him whose yearnings are immortal.

Lest, void of counsel in the desert way,
Any should share his fate, to death beguiled,
Whose waking cry none hears
When his destruction cometh as a whirlwind.



THE CASCADE.

UNDER the dark'ning bridge it ran
Into the sunshine swift and bright,
And there its fairy sport began,
Leaping from off the giddy height :
Young primroses, to see the sight,
Look'd up in pretty groups and smiled,
And the wild woodland's fav'rite child,
The delicate anemone,
Its perilous descent to see,
Grew pale and trembled with affright.

It sparkled in the May-morn sun,
Shooting its silver arrows round ;
A marvel manifold, yet one
In harmony of sight and sound :
O'er many a devious ledge it wound
Its moss-paved path and crooked fall,
Admired and wonder'd at by all :
No overshadowing turf, to gain
A lightning kiss, hung o'er in vain
Betwixt the bridge and level ground.

It rested for an instant there,
Check'd by its own light hardihood,
Then saunter'd downward with more care
Through the green mazes of the wood,
Like one in search of solitude.
Two squirrels, frisking round a tree,
Startled the ring-dove's reverie :
Were fable true, in this retreat,
Soft sounds of Naiads' tiny feet
Might fall, or wood-nymph's whispers brood.

But now, as one to real things
Led forth from childhood's imagery,
Its tribute to the stream it brings
Which broadens in the valley nigh :
Till, passing all the landscape by
Into the world of waters vast,
It is as one who knows at last
Existence without mortal bounds,
Encompass'd by the sights and sounds
And musings of eternity.

GRATITUDE.

SOME men in heart are like those hills
Where echoes of a cheerful strain,
Whose sweetness all the valley fills,
Steal on the senses back again ;

And some like lakes in moorlands bare,
Where many a pearly shower of grace,
Which makes the meadows glad and fair,
Mix'd with their waters, leaves no trace.

The rain must fall though it be lost,
And love be kind to every mood,
But Oh, I care not what it cost—
The smile of speechless gratitude.

MNEMOSYNE.

THOU reignest in a land whose flowers
Are fragrant, though their bloom is fled ;
Thou rulest o'er the quiet dead,
Sad queen of half this world of ours.

That half which, moving slowly round,
Has pass'd from underneath the sun,
Where purposed deeds shall ne'er be done,
Where what is lost shall ne'er be found.

And o'er thy mute dominion glow
Ten thousand stars that catch their ray
From vanish'd light of summer day,
Withdrawn immensely from below.

While, standing on the border line
O'er which their best beloved have gone,
Men wish they never had been born
To pleasures which so soon are thine.

Oh, sin ! for man to stand and weep
That life immortal is his share,
Because some dream, however fair,
Has faded when he wakes from sleep.

If to the years which still remain,
From those thou hast, his face he turn,
Within their span he yet may learn
One secret of his loss and gain.

Till fate and feud no more divide
The realms by Hope and Memory sway'd,
And Life, revisiting the dead,
Shall take thee for his chosen bride.



THE CROSS.

It stood in view of earth's highway—
God's right, man's deadly wrong :
Some, seeing, turn'd aside to pray,
Scorn'd by the proud, vain throng.

The might of patience slumber'd still,
As roll'd the ages by ;
Yet that dread cross shall make one will
Between the earth and sky.

And, at His word who bore its shame,
The seventh trumpet blown,
Shall conquest through the earth proclaim
O'er Mammon's ruin'd throne.

ALPHA AND OMEGA.

WHEN the first light of morning breaks
The spell by night's enchantment wrought,
Thou, by whose light the spirit wakes,
Be then the Alpha of my thought ;

And when the day's extinguish'd fire
Leaves dark the chambers of the west,
Its Omega of calm desire,
Its finish'd labour's crown of rest.

Blest is that life whereof in Time
Thou art, O Christ, the secret birth,
Its joyous and unchanging prime
In the new heavens and new earth.

The least whom Thou hast form'd from dust
Glorious among Thy saints shall rise,
In Thee the pearl of whose pure trust,
As in its native ocean, lies.

“HE COMES.”

HE comes ! the starry firmament
Soon—for the night is now far spent—
Shall be with dazzling glory rent ;
He comes !

He comes !—A Christless self who please,
Who live and worship at their ease,
His wrath shall slay upon their knees ;
He comes !

He comes !—Dear bride of the great King,
Prepare with heart and voice to sing
Your welcome to Him on the wing ;
He comes !

He comes !—O earth, earth, earth attend ;
The Son of man, thy murder'd friend,
On thee in judgment must descend,
He comes !

